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## Governor Locke Visits New Facility at Retsil

On January 7th, the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee held a reception at the Veterans Home in Retsil to honor outgoing Gov. Gary Locke for his commitment to making sure no veteran is forgotten, including the soldiers who have yet to come home.

The reception included a tour of the progress that has been made on the home's new facilities. The facilities have been under construction for almost two years, resulting in more than a half million man-hours.

John King, director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, described the reception as a "wonderful and momentous occasion."

"Gov. Locke, your legacy will speak for generations to come," King said.

The governor took the podium after a standing ovation.

"I'm very proud to be here," Locke said. "This is a great day for Washington veterans and a great day for the state of Washington."

While other states' veteran populations will gradually decline, the number of veterans living in Washington state is expected to increase.

"Our veterans look out for us, so it's important that the state of Washington looks out for our veterans," Locke said. "Today, it's our turn to serve. It's our turn to give back to our veterans and our



Governor Gary Locke attends a reception at the Retsil Veterans Home where he was honored for his commitment to "Serving Those Who Served."

future veterans."

Locke said he was extremely impressed with the new facilities he's seen.

"This modern design makes it more like a home than an institution," Locke said of the architectural model that will turn the home into a 240-bed skilled nursing facility.

According to Bill Bishop, one of five liaisons to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the new facility is the national model of comprehensive veterans services. The facility was constructed under Leadership in Energy and

Environmental Design (LEEDS) and even incomplete boasts many environmentally-friendly features. "This is absolutely terrific," Locke said of the spacious cafeteria in which the reception was held. "The design is beautiful."

Asked about the future of the veterans of Washington state, Locke was adamant.

"We're embarking on an evaluation of all our facilities," Locke said. "We have to. We have to have facilities for today's and tomorrow's veterans."

(Excerpts taken from Port Orchard Independent article by Hilary Maynard)

# GUEST COLUMNS



To WDVA Employees:

When I began with WDVA 19 years ago, my first assignment was as WDVA office manager in Bremerton, serving the needs of the Kitsap County veterans and their dependents. I then was

given the opportunity to work in King County with low income veterans and those veterans who had a substance abuse problem and also incarcerated veterans. Gradually, I moved from this community-focused work to the nursing home side of the WDVA house and began working with veterans in our State Veterans Homes. I became a licensed Nursing Home Administrator and had the honor of serving veterans, first at the Soldiers Home as the Superintendent and then at the Veterans Home as the Superintendent. Amazing work is accomplished at the State Veterans Homes and the staff members are without a doubt the most dedicated, compassionate people I have ever met.

However, the conflict in Iraq and the understanding that over 3,000 Washington State National Guard soldiers will begin returning home over the next few months brought my focus back to the needs of veterans in our communities, especially those of the Vietnam Era. As a nation and as a state, we need to build a better safety net to make sure no veterans fall through the cracks.

The greatest un-met need for our state right now is transitional services. WDVA must develop a comprehensive program to deal with the transitional needs of veterans who haven't fully adjusted to civilian life, whether the needs be housing, counseling or education. That is why I could not pass up the opportunity to direct the Transitional and Rehabilitation Services Program for WDVA.

The timing is right to put this program in place, ensuring all veterans have a chance at a hand-up and the opportunity to turn their lives around. I look forward to continuing our work together in this endeavor.

Sincerely,  
Jerry Towne



To WDVA Employees:

Over the last couple of years I have had the honor of serving as Superintendent of the Washington Soldiers Home at Orting. I have enjoyed that opportunity immensely and look forward to continued involvement with Orting as a member of the VA team.

Recently I was appointed as the Superintendent of the Washington Veterans Home at Retsil. It is with sincere appreciation and excitement that I assume this leadership role and this great honor! I am committed to serving our Veterans, valuing staff and contributing my expertise to the team.

The Washington Veterans Home at Retsil is embracing the philosophy and attitude of resident centered care as our primary objective in the future. Simply put, resident centered care places a focus and emphasis on independence, choice and a homelike environment. Residents will independently decide when they wake up, go to bed, eat meals and numerous other things that equal quality of life and promote dignity and comfort. It is with great excitement that we enter our new 240 bed facility with a resident centered care approach. The new Veterans Home supports the philosophy logistically by the neighborhood style layout and design.

This is an exciting time for residents, staff, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the State of Washington. I am thrilled to be a part of this new beginning, and look forward to meeting and working together with you and "*Serving Those Who Served.*"

Sincerely,  
Jon Clontz

# @ CENTRAL OFFICE...

## Legislative Update



Heidi Audette  
Legislative & PR  
Program MGR

The 2005 Legislative Session is underway and is off to a running start! Within the first 2 weeks, 774 bills had been introduced addressing issues from patient authorization rules to licensing drivers!

Every other year, the legislature meets in a long session, lasting 105 days. (Short sessions last 60 days.) This year is a long session during which the biennial budget is written and passed. It is typical during a budget-writing session to have three versions of each budget; the Governor's Budget, the

House Budget and the Senate Budget. Ultimately, the final product is usually a compromise including elements from all three. Because this year Washington also has a new Governor, a fourth budget version from Governor Gregoire will be released for the Operating, Supplemental, Capital and Transportation Budgets - so stay tuned for several budget updates over the next few months.

As in past years, the agency intranet or V-NET will have bill tracking information with links to the Legislature's Web Page. If you are looking for additional information on a specific issue, please feel free to contact me at: [heidia@dva.wa.gov](mailto:heidia@dva.wa.gov) or 360-725-2154 or visit the Legislative Web Page at [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov).



## Contacting Elected Officials

With so many important issues up for consideration, there might be any number of topics you want to contact your elected officials on. These contacts should always be made on personal time using personal resources such as your home phone or home e-mail. When in doubt on whether you may use state resources - ask! Your human resource consultant is available to assist and the Executive Ethics Board is a great resource as well. Ethics Board staff can be reached on-line at: [www.ethics.wa.gov](http://www.ethics.wa.gov) or by phone at 360-586-3265. If you need more information on who your elected officials are, you can find out by visiting [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov) or by calling the Legislative Hotline at: 1-800-562-6000. Each of these options also allows you to send messages and request responses from your elected officials.

# @ RETSIL...

## Assistant Plant Manager Hired



Dale Parker began working as the WA Veterans Home Assistant Plant Manager December 27, 2004. Dale has over 30 years of experience, specialized training and knowledge in facility and plant maintenance; materials and resource management; and supervision. He has worked for the State of Washington since 1997, most recently as the Chief Stationary Engineer at Department of Corrections in Shelton.

In addition to assisting the Plant Manager, Dale supervises the Powerhouse, Transportation and Custodial staff.

# @ VET SERVICE CENTERS...

## Past War Veterans Connecting With Current Returnees

The number of Vietnam War veterans, family members, and others seeking ways to connect with Operation Iraq Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) returnees has increased tremendously, according to WDVA's PTSD program director, Tom Schumacher.

"These veterans are all saying essentially the same thing: 'How can I get involved to help these men and women return home?'" Schumacher stated. "The request to help, in and of itself, represents not *just* evidence of heart warming compassion and empathy, but *wisdom* about the nature and affects of war. War

veterans seeking to help veterans of another war era is indeed moving, and marks the result of hard work in therapy and personal mastery over complex feelings, urges, desires, and fears."

This type of peer support may come just in time for helpful connections to occur as OIF/OEF returnees find themselves at home, searching for answers, and seeking their prewar lives.

At a recent Northwest PTSD Summit, Les Berger, Chief of VISN 20, was complimentary of the work being done in Washington among VA Medical Centers, Vet Centers, WDVA, and the Washington State

National Guard and reserve units. He noted that these efforts represented work unlike anything else in the country— "...a model for others to emulate."

Following the Summit, calls from Oregon, Alaska, and California asking for Schumacher's assistance with starting state-funded war trauma and/or PTSD outpatient treatment programs have come in to him. Most recently Schumacher has spent time with California legislative members and policy staffers drafting both policy and legislation aimed at placing a PTSD Program into California State statute.

## Olympia Service Center News

### Job Training Conference Scheduled

On February 3 and 4, Jim Rising, Program Manager and Alex Deluao, VBS will be hosting a Tribal Veterans Representative (TVR's) employment training conference at the Best Western Tulalip Inn. Attendance of about 20 TVR's is expected at the Marysville, WA conference. Anyone interested in the event should call 1-800-562-2308 for more information.



### Welcome back Robin!

Robin Wittenberg has returned to the Centralized Admission Team (CAT) after a three month leave of absence. Her return will greatly reduce the work load on Susie Houston, and increase the number of in-home screenings the agency performs, prior to admitting veterans into our wonderful veterans homes. The CAT does approximately 10-12 screenings a month to keep the beds filled at Orting, Retsil, and Spokane.

### New Receptionist Hired

The Olympia Service Center would like to welcome Eva Campbell to the staff. She joins them as an Office Assistant, replacing Nicole Rivera. The crew there are all very happy to have Eva on board. She comes to WDVA after many years as a grocer, and has many veterans in her family. We would like to thank Eva for making a commitment to "*Serving Those Who Served*," especially in this time of need for those veterans who have served in Iraq and their family members.



# @ ORTING...

## Cornelius Bibb Selected as New Dietary Manager

The Dietary crew welcomed the new Dietary Manager, Cornelius Bibb to the Washington Soldiers Home earlier this month.

Bibb was raised in a military (Air Force) family.

He has 30 years experience in the hospitality industry, with a unique combination of management, training, and culinary arts expertise.

Most recently he was the Dietary Manager at the Lawrence Street Health Care Center in Houston, TX. and has worked in several other long-term care facilities there. He also owned his own catering business.

Bibb acquired a Dietary Manager Certificate from the Texas HealthCare Association and is an Associate in Applied Science Graduate in Culinary Arts from New Hampshire Technical Culinary Arts College.

Bibb is thrilled to be in the Northwest and is looking forward to catching his first salmon, as he is an avid fisherman.



maintenance staff together to make it a guest suite the home could be proud of! I was determined to give it my all before the holidays. This is a special commitment by staff and administrators to show our support for the veterans and their families. This wish came true and I want to share it with everyone.

The maintenance department teamed together to renovate the guest suite in Betsy Ross. The unit's kitchen was being used for storage, and the bathroom needed lots of help. The maintenance department worked together and made an inviting, comfortable place for the families to come and stay during the holidays and throughout the year. This project was a major undertaking, which involved replacing the kitchen counter tops and sinks, restoring the floors and painting the walls throughout the unit.

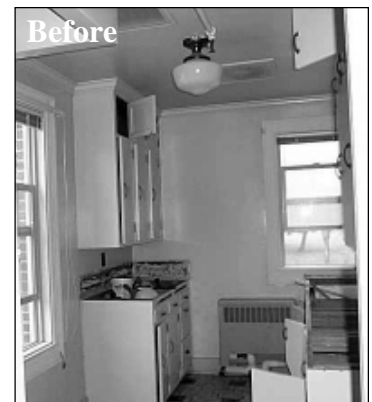
I want to say thank you to all that supported our efforts. We received donations, thanks to Lynn Zemke and her team; and the tremendous support from our superintendent, Jon Clontz, and our associate superintendent, David DeVore. A special thanks goes to my maintenance team: Mike Yandle; Tim Wilkinson; James Fitzgerald; Jack Boone; Greg McKernan; James Redle; Mike Smith; Martin Freitas; Ralph Firman; Stephanie Santos; John Fry; and Donn Lewis. Everyone worked together making this dream come true.

I feel confident this will be a special place for families to come visit our residents and a memory to take with them for many years to come.

## A Team Effort Shows Support of Residents and Their Families

*By: Linda Delatorre, Plant Manager 2*

I came to Orting to help serve our residents and staff. As I toured the buildings, I came across the guest suite located in Betsy Ross. I was so disappointed family members and friends had to stay in a room that was so out-dated and dreary. I gathered the



Unfortunately these black & white photos of the before and after don't depict the dramatic changes made to the Guest Room in Betsy Ross.

# @ SPOKANE...

## SVH Kitchen Addition Gets Underway



Moving the sewer line is the first phase of the kitchen construction project.

The 2004 State Legislature provided WDVA with the opportunity to build a kitchen at the Spokane Veterans Home. The SVH had space available in the existing building, but a kitchen was never built.

The new kitchen and expanded dining space will allow more options of food choices, dining times and ability for residents to dine with their family members. This will make the environment more home-like, increasing the quality of

life for all residents living at the SVH. The residents are anxiously awaiting the smells of "home cooking!" Staff are too, as they will also be able to purchase meals when the project is finished.

The area inside the current building will become the new kitchen with state-of-the-art cooking equipment, preparation area and dishwashing station.

Approximately 25% of the area will be used for storage and repair work. The dining room will be increased by about 20% to make room for expanded seating opportunities. Some of the worn areas of the floor will also be replaced.

Negotiations to purchase some adjacent property for the new 3,200 square foot Commissary/Maintenance building, are almost complete. A sewer line that would

otherwise run under this new building will also have to be moved.

This aggressive project schedule will be compressed so the kitchen can be completed prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> when the contract with the current food vendor expires.

Shawn Cole, Inc. and several subcontractors will be performing the work. They are sensitive to our mission and will strive to be mindful that *they work where veterans live*.



This area that was being used as the commissary storage, has to be emptied before renovation can begin.

## Congratulations are in Order!

**Donna Martin**, VARN /MDS Coordinator at the Spokane Veterans Home recently graduated from Washington State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. She was also named the valedictorian of her nursing class, graduating with a 4.0 GPA .

Donna carried the flag at the WSU commencement ceremony, and was chosen to sit in the honorees section.



*She's a Shining Star!*

# Further Restrictions Outlined in Sustainability E.O.

Prior to leaving office, former Governor Gary Locke signed a new Executive Order increasing the responsibilities of state agencies in utilizing sustainable practices. To read the entire E.O. visit the WDVA website at [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov).

The new Executive Order places further restrictions and goals on WDVA that can only be achieved with more efficient practices and efforts from all employees.

Some of the highlights of E.O. 04-06 include:

- ◆ A freeze on the purchase of any four-wheel drive sport utility vehicles and replacing standard biodiesel with no more than 20% biodiesel blend;
- ◆ Reduce the use of office paper by 30%;
- ◆ Recycle 100% of used office paper; and
- ◆ Reduce energy purchases by 10%.

New Washington State Governor, Christine Gregoire, will continue to mandate sustainable practices for Washington State. As former director of the Department of Ecology, she has a deep-seated interest in the environment and will continue to support the purchase of hybrid vehicles for state agencies as well as the reduction of energy, paper and the construction of sustainable buildings for state agencies. Under this new administration, the expectation is that sustainability and its efforts are alive and well and living in the Evergreen State.

For more information on WDVA's Sustainability Plan, contact April Harris at 360-725-2167 or [april@dva.wa.gov](mailto:april@dva.wa.gov).



Do you have an idea that's out of this world?



## EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

Employees on the front line know better than anyone how Washington State can save money. Through the Employee Suggestion Program, Individual employees can submit money-saving ideas and may receive a cash reward up to \$10,000. Applications must be submitted before the idea is implemented.

## TEAMWORK INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Some of Washington State's most effective teams originate from brainstorming sessions involving groups of employees. Through the Teamwork Incentive Program, groups of state employees submit money-saving process improvements and may receive a cash reward up to \$10,000 per team member. Applications can be submitted before or after the process improvement is implemented.

## PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Each year, for the first full week of May, a celebration is held to honor government employees. The Productivity Board is charged with facilitating PSRW in Washington State. Throughout this weeklong celebration events are held in Olympia, Spokane and Vancouver. Several awards are given out honoring outstanding employees, including the Extra Mile and Longevity Awards. The Extra Mile Award is given to employees who go above and beyond the call of duty and the Longevity Award is given to employees with 30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years of state service.

For more information contact the Productivity Board at 360.704.5203 or visit [www.secstate.wa.gov/productivityboard](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/productivityboard).

## IN THE WORKS

### Extra Mile Award Nominations Sought

It's time again to submit nominations for the Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) **Extra Mile Awards**. This award is 'peer nominated' for those who exude exemplary public service, acts of heroism, valor, or go the extra mile.

Last year, Mark Jones of Retsil and the Information Services team were awarded this prestigious award. Our agency has many outstanding employees, so let's have a good number of nominations to send in.

Nomination forms are available through your HR department, from the V-NET or by contacting the agency representatives on the PSRW Committee, Sandie Wollan and Miriam Young. Nominations are due by February 25th.

### What is Public Service Recognition Week?

PSRW is a national program administered by the Washington State Productivity Board. The purpose of PSRW is to:

- ✱ Recognize public service employees;
- ✱ Inform the public of the valuable services state government provides;
- ✱ Develop a stronger esprit de corps among public employees; and
- ✱ Encourage interest in public service careers.

The first week of May has been designated as "*Public Service Recognition Week*". This year PSRW will be held **May 1-7, 2005**.

Much effort is focused each year on the Celebration ceremonies held in Olympia but last year events in Spokane and Vancouver were also conducted. This year, PSRW representatives in the Tri-Cities and Seattle are working hard to coordinate events in those areas as well. Participating state agencies and their volunteer representatives provide time, energy, and resources coordinating these opportunities for agencies to inform and demonstrate to the public the services they provide.

PSRW in Washington State is made possible by the willingness of state agencies to share their employees' time and resources in a cooperative effort to plan and carry out recognition activities.

Other opportunities to participate include a children's coloring contest and talent competition. Watch for posters with more information available soon.

### Budget Proposes Salary Increases

Public employees have a fundamental role in the effective delivery of state services, and cost-of-living adjustments are simply part of the state's cost of doing business. Governor Locke's 2005-07 biennial budget proposal reflects this belief.

The current proposal provides pay increases for all state employees and includes \$106 million to fund the labor contracts negotiated under the 2002 Personnel System Reform Act. Under the law, the Governor is required to submit the cost of the agreements for an up or down vote by the Legislature. Rejection of the fiscal terms of the contracts would re-open negotiations.

#### Non-represented Employees

Another \$118 million provides salary increases for those employees who are not represented by a labor union, including non-represented employees of state colleges and universities. For these employees, the budget proposal includes a salary-and-benefits package similar to the agreements negotiated with unions.

#### Health Insurance

Under the proposal, state workers still contribute a targeted 12 percent of their health insurance premium costs, as they do today. But because overall premium costs are going up, individual employees will pay higher monthly costs. The state's contribution also will rise in the next biennium.

#### Salary Proposal Details:

The following terms apply to all general government employees. Terms vary for higher education employees. Salary increases subject to legislative approval.

#### Union-represented & Non-represented employees

Receive a 3.2 percent increase effective July 1, 2005. Another increase of 1.6 percent (except Teamsters, who receive 2.9) is provided effective July 1, 2006, until June 30, 2007, when it expires.

#### Salary Survey

For those employees who lag the most behind market rates (more than 25 percent) in the 2002 Department of Personnel salary survey, funding is provided to increase their pay to within 25 percent of market rate.

#### Job Class Consolidation

For those employees who will be affected by job class consolidations, salary increases will be granted when necessary for consolidation.

#### Performance Pay

For non-represented employees, the state provides \$8 million for performance recognition awards. Participating agencies would require approval of their performance pay plans by the Department of Personnel.